



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
www.hawaii.gov/elections

SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS**

February 24, 2012

Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to allow for the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters residing in areas, due to reapportionment, which are significantly smaller in population than normally associated with the justification and establishment of a polling place.

In 2011, the Hawaii State Reapportionment Commission and the Redistricting Commissions for the County of Hawaii and the City and County of Honolulu convened to develop new boundaries based on the last decennial census. In a normal reapportionment year, attempts are made, to the extent possible, to have boundaries line up with each other, so as to avoid areas being unnecessarily divided up on the basis of county council, state representative, state senator, and congressional lines. However, at times small population pockets will occur that will each need to have their own unique ballot type developed. A ballot type contains the specific contests, questions, or issues that voters who reside in a specific area are entitled to vote on.

The 2010 General Election, based on the 2001 Reapportionment Plan, involved 242 polling places. These polling places ranged in size from 188 to 6,000 registered voters. The average polling place is typically within the range of 2,500 to 3,000 registered voters. The present bill refers to population pockets of less than 500 registered voters that would require their own ballot type. Based on the 2010 General Election, the impacted polling places, assuming the 2011 Reapportionment Plan is the same, would be the following:

- District/Precinct 03/02 - Hale Aloha Nazarene School;
- District/Precinct 25/03 – St. Clement's Episcopal Church;
- District/Precinct 30/03 - Moanalua Elementary School; and
- District/Precinct 36/04 - Leeward Community College.

This reapportionment year, we expect that the ability to keep to a minimum the amount of small population pockets that require their own ballot type will be difficult to know or control. Specifically, because the 2011 Reapportionment Plan for the House of Representatives and Senate has been invalidated by the Hawaii Supreme Court and with the quickly approaching Primary Election, the Reapportionment Commission only had a limited amount of time to redraft the plan. As such, without sufficient time, the Reapportionment Commission may not have been able to have boundaries line up with each other, so as to avoid areas being unnecessarily divided up on the basis of county council, state representative, state senator, and congressional lines.

Additionally, even if the Reapportionment Commission had the time to make these attempts, the unique configuration of the various state, county, and federal lines, might make it inevitable that there will be small population pockets that will each need to have their own unique ballot type developed.

As such, given the small amount of voters in each of these possible population pockets and the financial resources and personnel required to establish and operate a polling place, the purpose of this bill is to permit the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters in these impacted areas, in lieu of the operation of polling places. Additionally, voters in these impacted areas will still retain the ability, in lieu of utilizing the absentee mail ballot, to vote in person at absentee walk locations that are opened at least ten working days prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1.

JEFFREY T. KUWADA
County Clerk



LANCE TAGUCHI
Deputy County Clerk

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/county/clerk

TESTIMONY OF
JEFFREY T. KUWADA, COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
FEBRUARY 24, 2012

Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to allow the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters in areas of small population, in lieu of operating polling places.

Due to the invalidation of the 2011 Legislative Reapportionment Plan, election officials do not know whether small population pockets requiring their own ballot type can be minimized.

Given the limited amount of time that the Reapportionment Commission has to complete its new plan, the Reapportionment Commission may not be able to devise a plan whose boundaries line up with each other, so as to avoid areas being unnecessarily divided up on the basis of county council, state representative, state senator, and congressional lines. Even if the Reapportionment Commission has the time, the unique configuration of the various state, county, and federal lines, might make it inevitable that small population pockets will have to be created and that each pocket will require its own unique ballot type.

Given the small number of voters in each of these possible population pockets and the financial resources and personnel required to establish and operate a polling place in each pocket, we favor having the authority to mail absentee ballots to registered voters in these impacted areas in lieu of operating polling places. Registered voters residing in these impacted areas will still retain the ability, should they choose, to vote in person at an absentee walk location for a period of ten working days prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1.

RICKY R. WATANABE
County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4800
TTY: (808) 241-5116



JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
Deputy County Clerk

Facsimile: (808) 241-6207
E-mail: elections@kauai.gov

**ELECTIONS DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**
4386 RICE STREET, SUITE 101
LIHU'E, KAUA'I, HAWAI'I 96766-1819

**TESTIMONY OF RICKY R. WATANABE
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUA'I
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, HD1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS**

February 24, 2012

Chair Oshiro and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD1. The purpose of this bill is to permit the county clerk to mail an absentee ballot to each registered voter who resides in a population pocket of less than five-hundred voters which requires its own unique ballot type. A ballot type contains a unique combination of contests, and ballot questions or issues that only voters in a specific district are entitled to vote on.

This bill offers a sensible solution to an unintended and unfortunate consequence of the reapportionment process. While considerable effort is made to establish simple, straightforward voting districts, oftentimes populations are distributed such that voting district boundaries required for federal, state and county elections cannot precisely overlay one another. The resulting deviation between district boundaries results in population pockets consisting of a relatively small number of voters who require their own unique ballot type.

By allowing all mail voting for these population pockets, HB 1754, HD1 ensures that an equitable amount of financial and personnel resources is allocated for servicing impacted voters. We also note that voters residing in a population pocket will always have the option to cast a ballot in-person at an early voting site which is opened at least ten working days prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD1.

RICKY R. WATANABE
County Clerk

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS*

League of Women Voters of Hawaii

49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813

www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MARCUS R. OSHIRO, CHAIR, MARILYN B. LEE, VICE CHAIR

FEBRUARY 24, 2012, 12:00 P.M. CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HB 1754 HD 1, RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Marian Wilkins, Member Voters Service Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii **supports** HB1754 HD1 which would allow the Office of Elections to facilitate voting for small populations of residents whose voting districts have been redrawn due to the latest census and redistricting.

Since polling places normally have ballots that list candidates that are to be elected from that specific area and since the numbers of voters who fall into each special category would be small, staffing and furnishing all the accoutrements for these polls would be burdensome and expensive.

It therefore seems reasonable to send ballots to the voters involved and have them returned by mail. The method would be the same as absentee voting. It is a tried and true method and would simplify the voting in these areas for all concerned.

The Office of Elections successfully conducted an entire special election by mail for the First Congressional district on short notice (in May, 2010). We are confident that given the circumstances described in this bill, voting by mail is the best solution.

Thank you for your consideration.